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I am Navy Medicine: Lt. Rusty English

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By Lt. M. Rustin English, MSC



TMHS MA&E (Market Analysis & Evaluation), left to right, Bernie Cofield, LT Rusty English, Angie Armentrout, John Lowery.

I remember it well; the image of the second plane hitting the World Trade Center forever changed my outlook on the world. I had just started my first semester in Mercer's Stetson School of Business after spending my first year Pre-med – I had realized that our medical capability had outpaced the design of our system(s).

The transition to Health Care Administration came naturally, as my passion to “build a better mousetrap” for healthcare delivery was immediately captured. Following the footsteps and mentorship of a close friend, Tim Slocum, I attended the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), and earned a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) in 2006), and Masters in Science of Health Care Administration in 2007.

While at UAB, I worked in a corporate business development office for a large not-for-profit health system; however, I was only able to function within the boundaries of the existing system – not fix it. During this time, I became aware of opportunities in the Military Health System (MHS) from one of my classmates Lance Wersland , who is now a Lieutenant Commander. The MHS's inherent characteristic of being self-insured, with both direct and purchased care avenues for delivery, immediately captured my attention. I decided to join the Navy – the memory of September 11th, now, burned brighter then ever.

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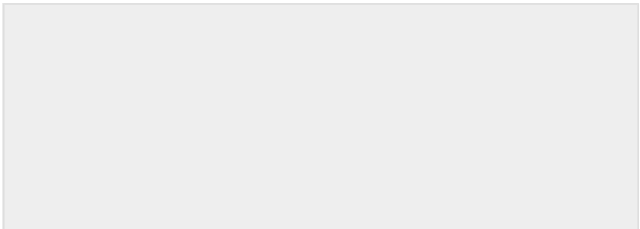
Tidewater Military Health System, eMSM – left to right, Maj. Monica Gomez Arenas, Bernie Cofield, Cheryl Baur, Col Lynn Johnson, Cmdr. Susan Union, Angie Armentrout, Lt. Col. Brian Wyrick, Lt. Rusty English.

I left business development after completing my MBA and took a fellowship at Edward Hines Jr. Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital. I felt like the VA would be a good option given their inherent relationship with the MHS. My year at Hines VA Hospital flew by, providing me with invaluable experience as business manager of one of the VA’s larger surgical operations.

In the summer of 2007, I reported to my first duty station, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth (NMCP). While the experience I gained as a business manager and administrative officer was phenomenal, the mentorship I received will always be the stand-out memory from my first tour. I, regrettably, don’t have room to list them all...but you know who you are.

My second tour would offer the opportunity, and challenge, of large-scale organizational redesign, while leveraging my VA background. I arrived for the ribbon cutting of the Department of Defense (DoD) -VA, Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center. My last two years were spent executing the \$400M+ financial reconciliation between the agencies. There were no instructions, or historical precedence – just building the right team to accomplish a complex task. I still have the picture of Walt Disney standing in front of a swamp that I hung on my door to promote a culture of vision and determination.

In September 2013, I reported to the Tidewater Military Health System (enhanced Multi-Service Market, eMSM) as Head of Performance Planning and Reporting. With the recent establishment of the Defense Health Agency (DHA), the eMSM’s, now led by a Flag Officer, Rear Admiral Moulton for Tidewater, were given additional authority, to include a single, and unified market business plan – my team’s primary role. Over the course of the following months, we worked with leadership at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth (NMCP), McDonald Army Health Clinic, and United States Air Force Hospital Langley to form a joint business plan covering 400k eligible beneficiaries, focusing on optimizing enrollment, bed utilization, specialty care, and operating room capacity. After finalizing the market business plan, an opportunity to volunteer for deployment presented itself.



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I have been blessed to have a phenomenal PAD team, Chief Hospital Corpsman Eric Watson left, and Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Jayanta Mohanty, right, supporting our efforts.

In March 2014, I reported to the USNS Comfort. The dynamic nature and the personal impact of the Continuing Promise mission are exhilarating. As several mentors have taught me, success is about empowering the talent around you. I have been blessed to have a phenomenal PAD team, Chief Hospital Corpsman Eric Watson, and Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Jayanta Mohanty, supporting our efforts.

I've always believed that you shouldn't go to work to make a living, but to make a difference. The United States Navy has offered that opportunity for more than 200 years, and I count myself blessed to be a part of it. Fare Winds!

I'm Lt. Rusty English. I am Navy Medicine.

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